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FM AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0399  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI PRIORITY 0440  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0010  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0005  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0001  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0004  
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SUBJECT: REPORT DOCUMENTS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN KAREN STATE

REF: 06 CHIANG MAI 212

¶1. A new report by the Thailand-based Karen Women's Organization provides further evidence that Burma's military government uses sexual violence against women. The KWO's report, "State Of Terror," amplifies previous reports that have documented cases of rape, murder, torture, and forced labor against women in ethnic areas such as Karen and Shan states.

¶2. In a meeting in Chiang Mai before the report's release, KWO activists told visiting Department of State Special Envoy for Social Issues Amb. Grover Joseph Rees and PolOff that they had documented more than 4,000 instances of violence over the past several years, including 959 rape cases. Activists said soldiers from Burma's ruling State Peace and Development Council used rape and other means of sexual violence to intimidate villagers from supporting armed resistance groups based largely in ethnic areas.

¶3. KWO researcher Blooming Night Zan told PolOff many of the recent cases of sexual violence occurred during the latest SPDC military offensive in Karen State, which surprised many observers this past year by continuing through the rainy season and led to increased numbers of refugees entering Thailand and internally displaced persons seeking shelter along the border (reftel). KWO General Secretary Zipporah Sein added that the organization hoped the timing of the Feb. 12 report's release would prompt more countries to voice disapproval over Russia and China's veto last month of a UNSC resolution condemning Burma's human rights abuses.

¶4. This latest report compliments KWO's 2004 report "Shattering Silences" and the Shan Women's Action Network's 2002 "License to Rape" report, both of which also documented rapes and other violent acts against women by SPDC soldiers. Representatives of other ethnic Burmese women's organizations - many cooperating under the umbrella organization Women's League of Burma and based in northern Thailand - told PolOff they are documenting ongoing violence against women in their homelands for use in future reports.

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